PR 5708
.W46 W3
Copy 1

Class _____

Book _____

WALLACE:

A

HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

FIRST PERFORMED

At the Theatre Royal Covent Garden,

On Tuesday, November 14, 1820.

By C E. WALKER, Esq.

London;

PRINTED FOR JOHN MILLER, 69, FLEET STREET.

1820.

(Price Three Shillings.)

PR 5708
.W46 W3

214955
15

Printed by W. SMITH, King Street, Long Acre.

TO

WILLIAM MACREADY, Esq.

AS

A SMALL TRIBUTE OF GRATEFUL FRIENDSHIP

THIS TRAGEDY

IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

Advertisement.

IN submitting the following sheets to public inspection, it would be truly ungrateful on the part of the Author not to acknowledge the many obligations under which he lies towards ALL engaged either in the performance or in the bringing out of his Play; and who, by their several exertions, so materially contributed to its success.

N. B. The metre will in some instances be found incomplete, owing to the necessary curtailments made during the rehearsals.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SCOTS.

Wallace, *Regent of Scotland*.....Mr. MACREADY
Comyn, *Thane of Cumbernauld*....Mr. EGERTON
Stuart, *Thane of Bute*.....Mr. MEARS.
Douglas, Monteith, Ramsay } *Leaders of the Army* { Mr. C. KEMBLE, Mr. ABBOTT, Mr. HUNT
Kierly, *Follower of Wallace*.....Mr. COMER
Fergus, *Clansman of Monteith*.....Mr. JEFFRIES

Helen, *Wife of Wallace*.....Mrs. BUNN

ENGLISH.

Clare, *Earl of Gloster*.....Mr CHAPMAN
Lord de Clifford.....Mr. CONNOR
Sir Reginald Fitz Eustace.....Mr. CLAREMONT

Officer, Soldiers, &c.

Prologue.

BY A LADY.

When the young Eaglet first aspiring tries
To stretch his pinions, and to reach the skies,
Bold from his native rock, he upward springs,
Hope cheers his bosom, and sustains his wings—
Till from surrounding clouds with undimm'd ray,
Bursts the effulgence of the God of day:
Struck by whose beams he turns his dazzled sight,
And conscious first of his adventurous height,
With new-born terror checks his eager flight.
So our rash Poet, in this hour of dread,
Hangs with dejected mien his youthful head—
Fears the keen glances of the public eye,
And trembling, owns, that he has soar'd too high.
Yet in this liberal, this enlightened age,
When patriot Wallace treads the British stage;
Say, will not candour spread her shield to guard
From too severe a fate, the aspiring Bard?
With kind forbearance his excuses make,
And spare the Author for his subject's sake?
Ye Scots! transcendant both in arts and arms,
Whose noble breasts the flame of freedom warms!
Ye generous English! ever greatly prone,
A sister kingdom's kindred claims to own!
Tho' once your Sires in hostile combat stood,
And bathed the embattled plain with patriot blood:
Those times are fled—no longer jealous foes,
Together bloom the Thistle and the Rose!
United still—oh! make one common cause,
And give to freedom's son your joint applause!

WALLACE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Interior of the town of Stirling.—Gateway in front.

Enter Comyn *and* Monteith.

Mon. At length 'tis come, that long expected hour,
When with fresh laurels from the field of fame,
Gaily bedeck'd, this new raised idol Wallace—
This chosen of the people, doth return.

Com. Aye, thou sayest well, this chosen of the people,
But outcast of all true nobility;
This god—but only of the grosser herd—
This rabble-mounted chief, who doth usurp,
'Neath the thin pretext of a popular choice,
That regal power, by birth and blood my due:
Thee too I think he has dislodged i'th' army,
Drawn to himself thy soldiers hearts.

Mon. No more,
The bare remembrance tortures me; be sure,
Tho' for wise purposes I seem his friend,
Thou cans't not more detest him than Monteith.

Com. Learn then, at once to lift thy soul to joy,
There's such a power still mine, as shall with speed
O'erturn and hurl his godship to the earth;
Throned tho' he be, and sceptered in the hearts
Of his brute worshippers, his wondering herd there.

Learn that this eve have I resolved, the Thanes
In council-hall assembled, to assume
That rank and royal station which my birth,
As next of kin to Baliol, well allows me.
Mon. Ha! but how stand the different Thanes disposed
To aid thy measures?
Com. All are ours, my friend:
All save the Douglas; he alone, fond youth,
Still firmly clings, as he were grafted there,
To the proud stem of our aspiring Wallace.
Mon. My curses on the stripling---he was born
To be my bane, and wheresoe'er I turn,
Still to oppose and thwart me; but for him
An union with thy ward the Lady Helen
Had placed me on the summit of my hopes.
Com. Yet what's a trothment made in infancy?
Besides, 'tis plain the lady loves him not:
Or wherefore, like the flower that closes in
At first approach of evening, ever thus
Shrink from his suit? Monteith, she shall be thine:
Let but this Wallace, this all-covering cloud,
That with its greatness shades us from the sun,
Be blown to air, and on her guardian's word,
She shall be thine! *(Shouts without.)*
Ha! hark! what means this tumult?
Mon. Oh, my Lord!
The crowd at their devotions! from the which
I guess their new divinity be nigh!
Com. Here break we off then. *(going.)*
Mon. How,—my Lord! you'll stay
To see the order of the entry?
Com. What!
To lacquey his proud pageant with my presence?
Bow as he pass, or bear his train belike!
At best make one o' the many 'mid the throng
That with their rank breaths bellow forth his praise!
Away! I'll from this mummery to my palace;
My honest soul disdains to hide in smiles
Its scorn and hatred! *(Exit.)*

Mon. (looking after him.) Hence! thou shallow Lord!
Thy hatred! thine! what then must be Monteith's?
Oh, Wallace! when I think that but for thee,
Who serpent-like at every winding cross'd
My path to fame, and with smooth seeming art
Coiling around, compressed the eagle flight
Of my full-plumed ambition; but for thee—
This wild acclaim perchance, these victor wreaths,
This triumph had been mine! while now—oh hell!—
And shall it ever be so, still, for ever?
No! I will cut this torment from my soul,
Tho' mine own life blood follow! let what will
Chance o' the issue, somewhat *must* be done,
That I may sleep at rest, or sleep for ever!
Ha! Douglas here!

(Enter Douglas.)

Doug. He comes, the conqueror comes!
Hear you those thundering shouts? The conqueror comes,
Triumphant in his might! from out the gate,
Assembling crowds swarm forth to welcome him;
The old, the young, the matron, and the maid,
Confusedly mix'd, roll in full streams along,
And Wallace! Wallace! is the general cry.
Far o'er the field as human ken prevails,
Plumed helms are seen, embossed shields, and spears
That sparkle to the sun; while far aloft
The frequent banner, flaunting to the gale,
Unfurls its blazonry; nor less descried
That standard, where the lion ramps in gold;
Pole-star of Scotland's liberty, which high
Amid the central host, in pride of power,
Towers o'er thy sacred head, victorious Wallace!

Mon. (aside.) That men should be besotted with him thus!
Yet, yet I will be patient. *(aloud.)* How is this?
The Douglas to his darling theme foresworn!
Fie! fie! my Lord; beshrew me, but 'tis well
Our jealous dames of Stirling hear thee not,
The lady Helen too——

Doug. I guess thy meaning.
Yet at a time like this, so rich in triumph,
So big with blessings to a rescued country,
Ev'n she should be forgotten!—True, I prize her,—
Oh, is there ought on earth I prize beyond her!
But 'midst a happy nations shouts, a nation,
Hailing with hearts' of rapture its deliverer,
What Scot's alive to any thought but one?

(*Trumpets and Shouts without.—Procession —Standard Bearers, with the Cross of St. Andrew, and the Thistle of Scotland, the Chieftains, each of whom is preceded by his particular banner, and lastly* Wallace, *who is surrounded by Military Ensigns.)*

Mont. All hail, thou Champion of thy country's rights!
Giver of liberty, all hail! to thee,
A rescued nation pours its gratitude!
To thee, who as the sun that sudden breaks
From forth the darken'd orient, hast dispell'd
The usurping mists, and given us once again
To gaze erect on the fair front of day!
Wal. Enough—that we have conquered be all thanks
Address'd, where solely they are due, to Heaven!
The rest is silence!
Doug. Oh, not so—to thee,
Next to that Heav'n, to thee, Heaven's delegate,
Be every praise ascribed; and woe wait him
Who with malignant envy would deny
This tribute to thy valour.
Wal. Oh! my friends!
My countrymen! 'tis not in words to speak
The joy your high applause creates within me;
But only this, that long as I shall breathe
The breath of life, I only live for you.

Ramsay *advances.*

What tidings bringst thou?
Ram. From the Southron Camp
The Lord de Clifford comes.

Wal. Admit him straight.

(*Enter* Lord de Clifford *with train as Ambassador.*)

Welcome, my Lord of Clifford: now declare,
And briefly, what your embassy imports.
Cliff. Thro' me King Edward greets this northern realm,
With thee its Regent, and to prove how far
Ye wrong his royal nature, wills to spare
The streams of blood that fate prepares to pour
O'er this devoted country, and propound
Fair terms of peace and amity.
Wal. Proceed!
Cliff. Let then this realm of Caledon return
To that allegiance, which on Dunbar's plain
She swore to England's Monarch; let her sons,
From his authority seduced, again
Acknowledge his supremacy, and here,
By every tie that binds mankind, he swears
To o'erlook the past, withdraw his armed bands,
And little as your lapse of faith deserve,
Restore ye to his favour and protection.
Wal. Unheard of grace! but first whence springs, proud Lord,
This insolence of speech? hast thou forgot,
How thine embattled bands, if fame be sooth,
The flower of Edward's army, fled before us?
Their banner'd trophies, which ere this had waved
In confidence of conquest, hurl'd to earth,
And trampled in the dust! can this have wrought
A theme whereon to boast?
Cliff. We've nought with this.
Nobles of Caledonia, in the name
Of Edward, England's sovereing Lord and King,
We wait your answer to the terms proposed.
Wal. Then in the name of this assembled land,
You have it,—'tis defiance!—for your King,
We know him not, but as a ruthless foe,
Who many a sorrowing year of servitude
Held this fair realm enthrall'd: and should we now,
By a tame, temporising treaty, court
The very bonds we have so lately broken?

No! as a free and independent race,
We spurn all terms that savour of subjection!
Tell the Plantagenet this; that there are here,
Who never will pay homage to a brow,
With foreign diadem encircled; who,
While but one drop of blood shall animate
Their liberal bosoms, will defend their rights,
Still will resist a tyrant!

Cliff. Who shall dare
Say this to Edward? whose resistless course
Has swept from realm to conquer'd realm—alone
That Scotland, mindless of the oaths she swore,
Refuses fealty to her lawful King!
How will his rage be kindled even to fury———

Wal. And let him rage: is Scotland fallen so far
That she should tremble when a tyrant chafes?
His rage! oh patience heart!—How then? if Edward
Would have the prostrate world beneath his feet,
The world, forsooth, must crouch at Edward's bidding,
For fear his rage—his rage!—oh excellent!

Cliff. Ye do reject his offer then; is such
The general voice of Scotland?

Wal. Lord! in me
Thou hear'st the nation's voice! thy masters grace
Meets the contempt it merits!

Cliff. Then list the royal Edward's last decree!
Since ye are thus perversely bent on ruin,
Since ye will pull the red destruction down
That nods above your heads, he bids ye stand
Prepared to meet no common shock of war;
For with yon powerful army, that has sped
From the far East on Victory's amplest wing,
He comes, as with a deluge, to o'erbear
The meagre might, and mustering of your arms.
Then yet, bethink thee———

Wal. Southron! I have said.
You have your answer; back then to your King,
And tell him, that the freedom Heaven has given us,
Shall not be lightly lost! enough, lead on!

(*Exeunt* Wallace *and train at the side wing,* Clifford, *&c. through the gateway.*)

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter Monteith.

Mon. Aye, shout, ye revellers, shout! And thou, sweep on,
Inflated Conqueror, we'll find a way
To cross thee in thy plenitude of pride!
Mean time, fair faced hypocrisy, do thou
Assist my purpose; mould my brow to the seeming
Of rigid'st honesty, and teach mine eyes
With well conceited truth to look the lie!
'Till guided by thy power, I gain at length
The topmost summit of success: but hold,
The conqueror's self.—

Enter Wallace.

Wal. Well met, my noble friend:
So, thou hast heard the assembled states' decree;
Edward encamps at Falkirk, and 'tis fix'd,
Soon as the morrow's sun shall streak the sky
With first approach of light, to give him battle.
Yet, e're we march, I fain would claim of thee
A few brief moments hearing; e're we part,
Perhaps to meet no more—
Mon. Away, my friend,
With such prophetic fancies.
Wal. Nay, Monteith,
Chide not, but hear me; for in vain I've striven
To conquer the forebodings that assail me.
Thou know'st that Edward's army treble ours;
Yet 'tis not that, were every troop a legion,
Could shake the soul of Wallace, if—but hear me,
While to thy faithful friendship I confide
A precious charge, a charge of all I hold
Most dear on earth!

Mon. What may this mean?
Wal. I'll tell thee; yes, Monteith,
For I dare trust thy faithfulness of love.
Know then, that if amid the morrow's strife
Thy Wallace fall, he leaves exposed, the sport
Of each cold pitiless blast, a tender shoot,
That as the trustful vine around its elm
Hath inter-wrought her foliage with his stem,
And fondly crept to shelter in his shade.
Say then, this tender one that thou'lt not leave
To the wild tossings of the impetuous storm;
That should it prove thy Wallace' lot to fall
I'th' morrow's strife, thou wilt protect—his wife.
Mon. His wife! you much amaze me, ne'er till now
Had I ev'n heard---
Wal. I know—that I was wedded.
Yes, my Monteith—forgive me that so long
I've held thee unacquainted with the event;
'Tis now three months have o'er us sped, since first
I call'd the tenderest, truest one, that e'er
Plighted her virgin faith to man, my wife.
Mon. And might a friend presume so far to ask
Whose more than mortal charms have thus ensnared
The conqueror's soul, and made it yield to love?
Wal. Oh! is there ought I would conceal from thee?
'Thou may'st have heard belike (for loudly fame
Hath blown her praises) of the lady Helen.
Mon. (*aside.*) Ha! can it be?
Mean'st thou the orphan heiress of Glencairn,
Whom the lord Comyn holds in ward?
Wal. The same.
Mon. Death and distraction! (*aside, then with an assumed air of indifference*)—What, is she thy wife?
Wal. She is.
Mon. In secret wedded didst thou say?
Wal. (*who has observed him with some surprise.*) --
Whence this concern? you seem disturbed, my friend:
And might I read your thoughts---

Mon. (endeavouring to recover himself)—Disturbed? oh no.
Somewhat surprised, I own, surprised at this
So unexpected mention of your nuptials.
Married to Helen! ha? and knew you not
That to the Douglas ev'n from earliest years
Her hand had been betrothed?

Wal. Oh never; no,
As heaven shall judge my actions, till of late
Trust me, I never knew it; nor my Helen
Had e'er considered such a trothment, made
Without her sanction and consent, as binding.

Mon. He knows not then——

Wal. None know it: it was fix'd
For some short space to hold the event concealed;
For so my love with earnestness besought me;
Fearful of what her fierce and fiery kinsman
Might in my absence put in force against her.
Should I then fall, to thy fraternal care
I do commit this dearest charge.
Wilt thou protect her?

Mon. Canst thou ask?—to doubt
That I but live to serve thee, and obey thee,
Oh 'twere to wrong, to underrate my friendship.

Wal. Enough! and now, I do but snatch an hour
To seek yon grove, which, like the miser's chest
Closing o'er precious gold, conceals my treasure,
Ere I rejoin you; then, my fellow soldier,
Once more to the field!

Mon. Away—I will expect thee.

[*Exit* Wallace.

Helen his wife! what Helen? she with whom
I should have wed? and oh! yet hold a while;
Let me digest my rage: in secret wedded,
And to the Douglas' destined bride: enough,—
It dawns, it rises on me: these fast friends—
I'll rive their fond entwining arms asunder.
Ha! yes, it brightens to my raptured view!

Instant I'll seek the affianced youth, and lead him
As 'twere by chance, towards yon appointed grove,
Where his own eyes may best behold their meeting.
Then let the tide of disappointed love,
Strong in its swelling rage, make good the wreck,
And glut me with the ruin of my foe! [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Wood.

Enter Douglas *and* Monteith.

Doug. See where beneath the shade of yon dark firs,
Her airy form shews like a spirit of light,
Streaming athwart the starless arch of Heaven!
Mon. 'Tis said I think her meditative mood
Will oft incline her from mankind apart,
To seek seclusion in a dell like this?
Doug. Oh aye—'tis ever thus—thou know'st, Monteith,
We were affianced even from earliest years,
Each to the other—yet, I guess not why,—
Whatever laurels in the field of fame
My conquering sword hath won—whatever vows
In the calm hour of peace my ardent soul
Hath at her feet a thousand times pour'd forth,
Could never win from that reluctant fair
One genial smile, one fond approving look,
One precious sun-beam th'wart a lowering sky,
To pierce the solid depth of my despair,
And woo me back to hope; in vain—in vain—
She flies me still, and in the dusky shade
Of some deep wood or melancholy glen
Nurses her soul in secret solitude.
And dost thou smile? away—I did not think
My woes had moved thy mirth!

Mon. Not so, my friend;
Nay, I but smiled to think that in the shade
Of some deep wood, or melancholy glen,
Not wholly of that solitary nature,
Might be the pensive maiden's meditations.
Doug. (*Alarmed*) Ha! mean you?
Mon. Nay, it was a mere surmise.
Doug. Surmise!
Mon. No more; why what have I affirm'd
To shake you thus?
Doug. (*After a pause*)—It was a damned thought!
But say, say out at once whate'er you think.
Mon. Nay, nay, enquire no more,—perchance, but no—
I knew not what I said; or if I did,
Thou wer't unwise to mark me.
Doug. Gracious Heaven!
And wilt thou leave me thus unsatisfied?
But thou hast never loved; hast never known
The stings, the racks, the torturing agonies
That tear a jealous bosom, else indeed
Thou would'st have pity on me; speak! oh speak!
Mon. No more; I have spoken but too much already.
Urge me no farther, Douglas; it were best
For both our sakes you thought on it no more.
Doug. By Heaven you stir not, no Monteith; I will,
I will be satisfied; you stir not hence
Till that—
Mon. Till what?
Doug. I know not. I'm in horrors;
In horrors worse than death! yet, yet resolve me!
Mon. What should I say?
Doug. Oh! if thou hast seen, or heard
Aught that concerns my Helen,—mark me, mine—
My Helen—in the face of Heaven my own—
I do conjure—I do command thee tell me.
Mon. Nay, take thy temper to thee,—as I think—
The lady Helen, in this vicious age,
Stands all aloof, and like yon mountains snows,
Still bears a name imperishably pure.

Doug. Not the fair lily fraught with dews from Heaven,
Or rose, ere yet it blossom to the breeze,
Can I conceive more chaste—but wherefore this?
Mon. She has charms too, if fame be sooth, might steal
A hoary anchorite from his ancient cell,
And fire his soul to long forgotten love.
Doug. *(After a pause.)* She is indeed most fair, but on, Monteith——
I guess not why—what would'st thou hence infer?
Mon. Simply that such united qualities
Might possibly have charms in other eyes.
Doug. Confusion! no! none dare even lift a look,
Breathe even a wish, or entertain a thought
Towards the betroth'd of Douglas; no, Monteith,
I will not think it; 'tis impossible.
As safely might that desperate wight essay
To pluck from under the proud Eagle's wing
Her cherish'd offspring, as oppose my love,
Or strive to rob me of my Helen's hand.
Away! it cannot be.
Mon. Beshrew me now,
But I rejoice to find you take it thus;
Even so—it cannot be, and that cold scorn,
That civil hate, I mean indifference,
With which the lady ever chills your suit,
Arises but from maiden bashfulness.
Think'st thou not so? I see, I see thou dost.
Doug. Let it arise from what it may, Monteith,
No more I'll battle with these damning doubts:
But seek at once my plighted bride, and—
Mon. *(as if thrown off his guard)* Ha!
Whither wouldst seek her?
Doug. Towards St. Cyprian's grove.
But now I watch'd her course.
Mon. Thou must not go.
Doug. Ha! must not
Mon. No.
Doug. Not worlds should bribe my stay.
I do perceive, Monteith, thou play'st me deep;

But spite of thy precautions I will pierce
The secret source of all this mystery;
These hurried glances, incoherent words,
And ill suppressed emotions——
Mon. On thy life
I charge thee hold—yet hold——
Doug. Away, away!
Mon. Yet hear me——
Doug. Hence!—or free me—or thou diest.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Grove.

Enter Wallace *leading forth* Helen.

Wal. (embracing her) My Helen!
Helen. Do I then once more enfold thee!
Oh joy, oh ecstasy unutterable!
For all my sorrows in thine absence past,
A full, an overpayment of delight!
Wal. And yet if one might argue from those tears:
Thou weep'st——
Helen. 'Tis true, but they are drops of joy;
Such as the Heavens do pour, when Nature smiles,
And all is peace, and all is sunshine round,
As from excess of rapture.
Wal. Matchless love!
Oh who shall censure that for one short hour
I loose myself from every thought but thee?
Yet soon—too soon——
Helen. What means my dearest lord?
Wal. 'Mid times, as these my Helen, ill it were,
To waste the languid and inglorious hours
In listless ease. To-morrow's earliest dawn
Sees us in arms again.

Helen. So soon—ah me!
My dreams foreboded this, and I remember
Then to have wished, that thou no more would'st follow
The wandering path of fame, but that together,
Remote from human dwelling, we might find
Some unknown spot, fair as of old that garden,
Where happy in each others converse dwelt
The parents of mankind; that we might know
No pang of parting, such as now impends
O'er my sad spirit, but with loves and joys
Ne'er ending, tread the sweet descent of life
Unenvied and unknown. You turn away.
Oh! look not on me thus. *(He regards her sorrowfully.*
Wal. No more: believe me,
If ought on earth could tempt me to forego
My destined course, it would be those pure joys
Which thou in all so eminently graced,
Wert born to kindle: but it may not be:
(Taking her hand) Helen, it must not: no—that wretch were curst,
Doubly and trebly curst, who could sit down
In calm inaction, and resign his soul
To selfishness of bliss, while all unheard
A suffering country pour'd her groans around!
Helen. Am I thy wife, and could I counsel this?
No, champion of thy country's holiest rights,
Go forth, and conquer! Helen bids thee forth!
And yet—*(leaning on his bosom).*
Wal. You pause—why that dejected look?
Helen. Our secret 'spousal, Wallace; there's the weight
That sinks my soul; should any chance reveal it
Ere thy return, how, how should I sustain
The proud implacable Comyn's rage, or how
The loud reproach of Douglas!
Oh! they would tear me from thee; deep enshroud
In some dark dungeon's cell this helpless form,
Whence I might never, never see thee more!
Wal. 'Tis fix't then, every scruple hence, 'tis fix't,
We will not part!

Helen. Then am I blest again.

Wal. But list my purpose ; ere the morrow dawn,
We march for Falkirk, thither too shalt thou :
The faithful Kierly, whom I well may trust,
Shall be thy safeguard while the battle joins.
Thence if success attend us, 'tis resolved,
In the full face of an approving world,
Will I avow thee mine ; but if—and oh !
What mortal eye shall pierce the veil of fate,
What mortal tongue prescribe how things shall be
If for some end inscrutable to man,
The tyrant foe prevail, thou'lt not refuse
To take thy lot with me, with me to share
A warrior's fortunes, and a wanderer's cheer :
Wilt thou, my Helen ?

Helen. Oh with thee ! with thee !
Husband, dost hold me to thy heart, and yet
Can'st ask that question ?

Wal. So—farewell awhile ;
I fear my time—
The chiefs in council met
Already chide my stay ; nay, hold me not,
This one embrace, and then—

*(*Douglas *suddenly enters from behind, and starts on beholding them.)*

Wal. (*embracing her*) My heart's best bliss !
May every angel wait with outstretched wing
To shelter thee from ill. [*Exit.*

Doug. Do I live ! do I breathe ?
Are these my hands I look on ? I must doubt it,—
'Tis apparition all !

Helen. (*as referring to her past discourse*)
Oh blissful sounds !
We will not part.

Doug. She speaks—the charm's dissolved—
It is her voice, and I am lost for ever.

Helen. (*who has remained looking after Wallace now turns round, her eye encounters Douglas, and she remains as petrified with surprised.*)
Ha ! Douglas here !

Doug. Even he, the wretched Douglas,—
Who tho' divorced from every joy on earth ;
Still lives for vengeance. (*Drawing his sword and meditating to pursue Wallace.*)
Helen. (*rushing up*) Vengeance ! ha! on whom ?
Merciful Heaven ! what would'st thou do?
Doug. I know not ;
My brain's a chaos of conflicting passions ;
Yet 'mid the warfare there one horror still
Glares hideous o'er the rest ; the thought that all
I e'er built up of bliss on this side Heaven,
Is in one fatal moment dash'd to earth,
And lost to me for ever ; let me pass.
(*Endeavouring to break from her.*)
Helen. Would you but hear !
Doug. Oh all ye powers, as yet,
I had not heard enough! away, away,—
'Tis useless all ; by Heaven's whole host I swear,
Yon haughty rival shall not carry it thus.
No, were he fenced with circling legions, each
Embattled sternly to oppose my way,
I'd thro' and thro' them, till his heart's best blood
Had pour'd in expiation of his guilt!
Helen. His guilt ! oh no, he knew not of thy love,
Indeed he did not ; here, before thine eyes,—
Stir not—she stands who has alone deceived thee ;
On her then be thy vengeance wreak'd.
Doug. Away,
I neither hear thy words, nor guess their meaning ;
Nay, 'tis in vain thou striv'st—thus, thus I break
From your firm hold—
Helen. Go then, thou frantic youth'
Perform the 'vengeful purpose of thy soul :
Strike at our country's hope, its heart and strength,
The bulwark of its tottering liberties ;
To whose devoted valour and achievements
Thou with all Scotland owest thy present safety !
Doug. (*aroused to a sense of shame, and dropping his sword*)
Ha ! how mine arm seems withered !

Helen. Strike him down,
Him who preserved thy life! who, when the foe
Had borne thee backwards in the battle fray,
Flung o'er thy prostrate form, and made his own
A shield, to guard thee 'gainst the opponents spears!
Doug. In mercy spare—
Helen. Nay, wherefore should'st thou pause?
Dost need a new incentive, think how Edward
Will gift the hand that rids him of his foe!
Edward will give thee office, honour, wealth,
A countless store; and sure when weighed with these,
Freedom, it were a feather in the scale!
Doug. Oh! save me. Save me from that thought, just Heaven!
But I deserve it all; and more, much more
Than bitterest scorn or hate can heap upon me;
For I'm the very blot and stain of honour.
Yes, taunt, revile me, 'whelm my prostrate soul
With keen upbraidings; brand me for the slave,
The veriest, vilest slave that ever fell
Below the world's contempt: I'll bear it all.
Helen. Art thou so penitent and full of shame?
Then hast thou not deceived me, but art still
That which I ever thought thee; that same Douglas,
The kind companion of my earliest years.
Oh those wild phrenetic words my passion uttered!
But thou'lt forget them, wilt thou not! and take
These tears in token of my deep contrition;
For having wrung with such reproachful terms
Thy generous nature? What! dost thou avoid me?
Doug. Avoid thee! no, but 'tis in vain; you must;
You cannot but despise me!
Helen. Nay; not so;
I know thee noble; and a generous mind,
Tho' swayed by passion it may sometimes err,
Will, conscious of the wrong, regain its empire
Even with recruited strength? Come; think no more o'nt,
Trust me, 'tis I have been the most to blame;
I, who so oft have proved thy worth, and yet
Could hold thee as an enemy from my bosom.

But oh! the great, the good, the godlike Wallace—
What had *he* done? he knew not of thy love;
Indeed thy thoughts had wrongfully accused him,
If that—

Doug. Oh cease! I see it all—I feel
Mine own unworthiness; nor need'st thou urge
That hero's worth, his fame, and great acquirements,
To shew me the presumption of my hopes.
Yet, had I earlier known—but let that pass—
Thou lov'st him—and would'st fain become—his wife.

Helen. I am his wife! Three moons have scarcely wain'd,
Since at Dunbar we were, in secret, wedded.
Dost thou not listen?

Doug. (*aside.*) Down my heart; be still,
Nor tell thine anguish.

Helen. Wherefore stand you thus,
With looks averse, and eyes bent down on earth?
You would not sure betray?

Doug. I! I betray!
It is too much to swear I will not do it!
Thou can'st not, Helen—no, thou dost not think it.

Helen. Indeed I do not; for upon that brow,
As in the front of yonder Heaven, sits truth,
Pourtrayed in undeniable characters.
But how is this?—you weep.

Doug. (*Unable longer to contain his emotions.*)
It is in vain.
I can endure no more,; and yet methinks,
Might these few tears well find forgiveness here.
For who, condemned to pine in endless night,
Could quit his glimpse of Heav'n without one pang,
One tear drop of regret; but, it is past.——
Nature awhile may boast a short-liv'd triumph,
But the fix'd heart shall hold its purpose still.

Helen. Exalted, generous youth!

Doug. Enough; now mark!
How I have loved—witness these present pangs.
But hear me, ye in Heaven! while thus I swear
To tear each fonder feeling from my breast,
Save what a brother's love may sanction there;

Nor leave one trace of that disastrous flame,
That has so long consumed me—Helen; yes,
Be happy with the husband of thy heart;
And may each pang this breast is doom'd to prove,
Be recompens'd in blessings on your head!

(*After a pause, during which he surveys her for some time as if to collect fortitude.*)

Farewell! [*Exit.*

Helen. (*looking after him.*) Farewell! and may thy guardian Saint,
Where'er thou goest, watch over and preserve thee!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Council Chamber.

Wallace, Comyn, Stuart, Monteith, Ramsay, &c.

Wal. Thus then fame honor'd chieftains have I rang'd
My full array.——Lord Douglas, with his troop
Of serried spearmen spreads along the front.
Thou gallant Stuart, as beseems thy birth,
Lead the left wing. My Lord of Comyn, thou
With thy renown'd retainers, hold the right;
While their light-horsemen station'd in the rear,
Stout Seaton, Oliphant, and Hay assist,
As in the course of action need demand.

Monteith. (*to* Comyn *aside.*) Now, now, my Lord, the season is most apt
To gall him in a vital point, and teach
That lofty soul of his to know itself.

Com. Doubt not my faith.

Enter Douglas, *who approaches* Wallace.

Mon. (*observing him*) Ha! Douglas! on my soul
He takes him by the hand—he smiles upon him!
Death to my hopes! (*retiring.*)
Com. (*Approaching Wallace with an assumed air of humility.*) Most high and mighty Sir,
We your sworn warriors cannot but admire
The deep and comprehensive skill, display'd,
In this the disposition of your powers:
But there remains one post as yet unnamed;
And if a humble individual
Might so far trespass, we would fain inquire
Who leads the van?
Wal. (*eyeing him from head to foot; then with great majesty*) Your Regent and your Chief!

(*A pause, after which turning off, he appears to give orders in the back ground.*)

Com. (*to Nobles*) Mark ye, my Lords—observe the silent scorn
That fires his eye, and frowns on all around:
So have I heard that on a certain time,
The owl, as legends say, with self-conceit
Puff'd vainly up, would flaunt it o'er the tribe
Of nobler birds, whose borrow'd plumes he bore!
Doug. (*starting indignantly from his seat.*)
And hast thou not heard too, that there were those
Could talk it largely in the hall of peace,
Who at broad noon, in the fair field of war,
Have blink'd indeed like owls, and shrunk away?
Com. How! this to me; address you this to me?
Doug. To you, and all;—aye, chew your rage, my Lords—
To all I say, of whatsoever degree
Would fling their envious foams on worth and honour.
Stuart. Ha! say'st thou, stripling?
Doug. Aye, thou haughty Lord,
Nor more than with my sword I dare maintain.

Stuart. And dost thou threaten ?
Doug. No, for that's to talk,
And ever have I shun'd the strife of words.
Stuart. Presumptious youth ! thy life—
Mon. (*interposing*) Hold ! hold ! my lords,
You go too far.
Doug. Nay give his anger way :
Howe'er it fret himself, it frights not me.
Stuart. Now in the face of these assembled Thanes,
My sword—
Com. Draw, Chieftains, draw.
Doug. Have at ye then.

(*The Chieftains on both sides draw their swords,* Stuart *and* Douglas *exchange a pass, when* Wallace *rushes unarm'd into the midst, and strikes up their weapons, then authoritatively*)

Wal. Hold ! I command ye ! peace and silence, chiefs !
And is it come to this? at such a time ?—
Shame, shame ! put up your swords.

(*A confused murmur,* Douglas *and a few only obey.*)

Wal. (*to the rest*) And will ye not,
Then mark me, Lords ; full well I wot the source
Of these dissentient brawlings ; aye, and thus
I hurl it at your feet !

(*Throwing his truncheon on the ground.*)

Now, now, my lords,
Your pleasures are accomplished. I resign
My marshall's staff. Now take it he who will :
My lord of Stuart, Angus, Athol, Lorn,
Or you, my lord of Comyn ; *you*, I know
Have look'd towards it with a wistful eye
Full many a year ; *you'll* not refuse it sure ?
Com. (*confused.*) Insulter ! but I'll be revenged for this.

(*Is going out when* Monteith *catches him by the arm.*)

Mon. (*aside.*) Think, think, my Lord, the means
are in your power;
'Twere best our arms should want success to-morrow:
You understand me!

Com. And they shall, by Heaven. [*Exit.*

Wal. Shame! shame, ye cavaillers! Is this a place,
Is this a time for faction and cabal?
See ye not yonder where the tyrant's tents,
Like the thick sleet by wint'ry tempests spread,
Whiten your plains around? And will ye then,
Oh! will ye in one factious hour forego
All, all your glorious and long-cherish'd hopes
Of fame and freedom? Will ye sacrifice,
At the rank altar of domestic broil,
Your country's rights and everlasting weal?

Stuart. No! never! never! we have been to blame.
Forgive us, gallant friend, we sheathe our swords.
Prithee forgive, and as becomes the brave,
Lead on the vanguard—Stuart is content.

Wal. Here, from this hour then ends our difference;
And from my soul I joy in such a chief,
Once more to clasp a comrade to my breast.
But this the warriors courtesy; (*embracing.*) and now
Each to your several posts.—
Yet first—but no—
What need of words?—I see—ye grasp your swords,
And each determined brow declares its purpose!—
Let then the loud war, like a bursting cloud,
In thunders break upon them!—On ye Brave!—
And Heav'n—and good St. Andrew for our cause!
[*Exit.*

(Followed by the Chieftains, while the curtain falls to the air of "Scots wha ha wi' Wallace bled.")

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Plain, supposed to be near the Field of Battle. Drum and Trumpets as the Curtain draws.

Enter Monteith, Fergus, *&c. hastily.*

Mon. Enough—ye have your orders; at the side
Of yon precipitous and secret glen,
She waits the issue of the fight; away,
And fortune great as your designs attend you.
[*Exit.* Fergus, *with others.*
Aye, my young mistress! tho' I nothing prize thee,
As heaven who knows this heart will bear me witness,
But as a step to my ambition; still
Thou must be mine, and shalt be; thy broad lands,
The means whereby I mount to glorious power!
Ha! Ramsay!

Enter Ramsay.

Whither! from the field?

Ram. All's lost!
Stuart lies low amid his slaughtered bands;
And Comyn, or from cowardice of heart,
Or predetermined treachery, withholds
His legions; as a last resource—I haste
To summon the reserve. (*exit*)

Mon. I seek the fight!
(Making a few steps to the side, then pausing)
Why, this is well; the game goes bravely on;
Stuart, the Bute, is down; and Cumbernauld
Denies to lead his forces to the field!
Nay, Wallace, 'tis in vain thou striv'st; in vain
That right arm still so desperately deals
The ponderous death-axe round; thy sun hath spent
Its meteor blaze, and sets to rise no more! [*Exit.*

(Tumult from withont—several Soldiers pass in disorder across the stage; Douglas *endeavoring to rally them.)*

Doug. Turn, turn for honour! are ye Scots, and fly?
Your freedom's standard, which thro' years of fame
Has led to conquest, trampled in the dust!
I charge ye, stand!
Sol. It is in vain we strive!
Who shall withstand their numbers?
Wal. (rushing in.) Wallace! I will!
Yes, let contention thunder to the clouds,
And ruin pour the purpling deluge on;
Here will I fix—and singly stem the tide,
Till the foil'd waves back to their fount retire,
Or 'whelm me in their rush!
Doug. Thou gallant heart!
Oh, can ye gaze on worth like this, my friends,
And seek inglorious flight?
Wal. (with indignation.) Let them go all!
Ye shivering hinds! hence, to the lordly Edward;
Display a show of penitence, and beg him
On bended knees to spare your recreant lives!
He will forgive ye, he is merciful—
Most kind, and merciful;—Oh, Scots!—Scots!—
Heavens! must I call you such!—there was a time,
When in a cause like this, your sires had stood
Each undismayed against a host of tyrants;
Reck'd not of numbers—no, nor felt a wound,
While he who gave it lived;—Oh, shame! look there!
See where the foe knee deep in carnage strives

O'er your fallen countrymen!—what!—have ye hearts,
Nor rush to instant vengeance?
Sol. Lead us on,
We'll follow—to the death we'll follow Wallace!
Wal. Ha!—then, indeed there's hope—thou, Douglas, speed
Eastward thy course—for there the gallant Græme
Doth urge unequal war; and needs our succour—
Myself will stem the assault—on comrades—on—
And let the shout of liberty resound
From hill to hill—till the loud echo shake
The tyrants inmost soul—forward—
Death!—death, or victory!
Sol. Liberty and Wallace!
[*Exeunt. tumultuously.*

SCENE II.

A deep Glen, surrounded on all sides by lofty Banks, &c.—Kierly *and* Helen *discovered*—Kierly *has climbed an Eminence, and is looking out as at the Battle*—Helen *below.*

Hel. Canst thou see aught, good Kierly?
Kier. O'er the plain
Mine eye beholds a fierce and fiery mass,
Confusedly mix'd together—but no more—
Thick clouds of dust forbid a further view.
Helen. Moments of doubt and terror! where art *thou*?
Now where art thou 'mid such surrounding perils,
My heart's sole hope—mine own—own warrior, Wallace?

Oh, wheresoe'er---watch o'er his precious safety—
Protect him, heaven!
(*Distant shouts from without.*
Ha!—hark! what sounds were those?
Kier. By heaven and earth—
'Tis as I fear'd—in that so desperate charge
The foe have pierced our ranks—and vainly now
May Scotland stem the assault—all—all is o'er.
Helen. Sayst thou ——?
Kier. They fly—on this and every side,
Oh! sight of shame! they fly—
Hel. And Wallace—speak—
Kier. I can discern him not—
Hel. And yet, oh fool!—
Fool that I was to think it—would he fly?—
Would Wallace fly? vain hope---he's dead, he's dead!
And yet I live to say so!
Kier. Hah!—'tis he!
Yes, now I see him—he disdains to fly—
Tho' press'd by numbers, still maintains his stand;
High lifts his mailed arm, and shouts aloud,
Alas! how vainly—to his shattered bands,
Who faint and flag behind!—
Hel. (falling on her knees) Save—save him, Heaven!
Kier. Oh, how he stems the opposing powers, and still
Would reinforce the fight!—in vain—in vain—
They press around—they gird him singly in—
They close upon him with o'erwhelming force—
Oh, I can gaze no more!
Hel. My mother earth!—
Thou last sole rest and refuge of the weary,
Receive me to thy sheltering breast for ever!
(*Sinking on a Bank*—Kierly *descends.*)
Kier. By heaven he shall not be thus vilely lost—
Where is Monteith? the generous Græme—the Douglas?—
Will they stand by, and see their champion slain?
It cannot be—myself will seek them out,—
Will haste to save—but ah! I had forgot—
(*Observing* Helen, *with concern.*)

Hel. Me! me! away—waste not a thought on me!
(*impatiently*)—Still, still, thou tarriest.
Kier. All Heaven's saints preserve thee!
(*he rushes out*

Enter Fergus, *with others.*

Fer. Haste—haste thee hence, fair lady—soon this spot
Will all be covered o'er with clashing armies;
Oh! haste thee hence—e're yet the speedier foe
Shall intercept your way.
Hel. I will not stir!—
Go—seek thine own vile safety—hence away—
And leave me here to die!
Fer. It must not be—
Even now thy lord expects thee—
Hel. Ha! my lord!
What lord?---
Fer. Thy husband, Wallace---even now
He gave command that we should bear thee hence,
Tow'rds yonder hillock, where himself attends
To speed thee on thy journey.
Hel. (*wild with joy*) Then he lives?---
Freed from the toils that compassed him---he lives?
Fer. He does---tho' sorely from the strife of death, o'erspent and weary—
Hel. But he lives!---he lives!---
(*dropping on her knees*)
For that I bend in thankfulness to Heaven!
Oh! let us hence---he waits me as you say---
Fer. Beneath yon hillock---whence he bade me tell,
(For urgent need forbids his presence here---)
It was his purpose to conduct thee straight
To some asylum on the seaward shores,
Of southmost Carron.
Hel. Then away to him---
Each moment teems with fear---till truly safe
I feel me clasp'd in his protecting arms! [*Exeunt.*

Enter Monteith.

Mon. They have her!---Fortune---I absolve thee now
For all unkindness past---the game's mine own:
See---see, they hurry her across the glen---
The steeds are all in needful readiness---
They mount---they scour the plain!
(a retreat sounded)
Ha!---a retreat!---'tis so—they come this way—
How will it tear the husband's soul, to see
His Helen lost!—I'd stay to hear him rave;
And make me merry with his miseries—
But from the fear my transports might betray me!
[*Exit.*

Wal. (from without) Command they set a standard on the hills,
To guide our scattered powers—for there we'll join them.
(Entering with others) Come, let us hence my Helen—Kierly, hoa!
Helen—where art thou?—'tis thy Wallace calls thee.
Kierly, I say—

Enter Kierly.

Kier. My chief—
Wal. He comes alone!—
Where is thy precious charge?—thy mistress—speak!
Kier. Is she not here, my lord?
Wal. Thou seest!
Kier. In sooth
I cannot guess—'twas in this spot I left her—
Wal. My mind misgives me—was it in this spot?—
Art sure of that?
Kier. In this same spot, my lord.—
And ha!—behold a voucher for my truth—

(taking up a veil that has been left on the bank)

Wal. Away! hence some of ye, and skirt the Glen;
Search every thicket, every hidden dell,—
Perchance she may have wandered heedless on,
And lost her in these wildering labyrinths—
Perchance, oh, horror! what a thought was there!
Some straggling parties of the foe,—perchance!
It must be so; why then tis useless all;
She's lost for ever! irretrievably lost!
(*Seizing* Kierly) Villain and slave! at such a time to leave her—
How didst thou dare—ha! hold, forgive me, Kierly,
(*Relinquishing his hold*) 'Twas in my cause! I knew not what I said;
Thou would'st have pluck'd me from surrounding deaths,
At peril of thy life!
Kier. My dear, dear master!
Wal. And is she gone! the sole remaining bliss
This wretched heart could owo neravished from me!
Fate! fate! there needed not this stroke to sink me!
Oh, Helen! oh, my wife! my wife!
(*Cries from without of* "A Douglas."
Wal. (*starting*) What sound was that? did ye not hear? again—
Ha!—yes—it is my Helen!—

Enter Douglas, *leading in* Helen, *who throws herself into the Arms of* Wallace.

Hel. Oh! my lord!
That I am thus restored to thee again,
Thanks to this generous youth—whose timely aid
Has snatched me from I know not what of peril.—
Wal. Ha! Douglas!
Doug. (*approaching*) Do not turn away—I read—
In those averted looks too plainly read
The full emotions of that generous heart.

Nor, trust me, come I at a time like this,
(The foe victorious, and our slaughter'd friends
Yet warm and weltering on the ensanguined plain)
To add to thy distresses—but to soothe them—
Hear me, my Wallace—(*taking his hand*)—it was ne'er in fate
To bless the Douglas with his heart's sole hope—
And yet be witness every power above,
That ne'er was hope so twin'd around the heart
As this—to call that heavenly fair my wife!
Tis past! 'tis o'er! tis gone from me for ever!—
I have now no happiness but thine—no hope
Save that—to see ye in each other blest!—

Wal. Douglas, I fain would speak to thee—would tell thee,
Thou excellent young man—I cannot! all
Is so full here—but let my silence thank thee!

Doug. Enough! thy hand—and thou, my sister—thine—
Now prithee heed me well—while here in sight
Of heaven and man, I solemnly confirm
With mine own voice, all sacred ties between you!—
Protect her, Wallace! with a watchful zeal
Shield her from every want—from every woe——
(*His voice faultering*) And be to her—what Douglas would have been,
Had the kind heavens but smiled upon his suit.

Wal. My brother, stay; for 'tis in vain you'd strive
To spare your friend the sight of it—I see,
I feel your woe!

Doug. And if the treasure cost
No pang at parting, were it worthy thee?
But in the din of war I'll henceforth drown
These woman's feelings; and tho' lost to love——
Be to the field of danger ever found
In the maintaining of my country's cause.
Farewell! I would not pain thee by my presence;
An hour returns me, Wallace, to thy troop.
(*Approaching Helen*) Yet at the shrine where he so long hath worship'd,
Ere the poor pilgrim take his final leave,
(*Kneeling*) Thus let him bend in humble adoration

Thus crave to print one parting sad adieu
On what he ne'er must hope to visit more—
(*Kissing her hand, then rising*) Farewell! Farewell!
[*Exit.*

Wal. Oh, good and great and glorious!—well my friends,
My firm and faithful little band, thank Heaven
We're yet entire! this standard too redeemed,
Again may toss its blazonry aloft,
And stream defiance to the foes of freedom!
Meantime to seek yon wild and wooded shores,
Where we have fixed to join our scattered forces:
Have with ye, friends; and thou, my Helen—e'en,
While yet thy wedded warrior can protect thee——
Come; thro' each hazard, every imminent strait,
We'll hail thy innocence our surest guard. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Wood.

Enter Monteith, *followed by* Fergus.

Mon. Traitors and slaves!
Fer. Yet hear me, good my Lord.
Mon. Hear thee! away! canst disannul the fact?
Has she not 'scaped me? like an empty shade,
Even as I rush'd to clasp her, vanish'd from me?
Oh, I could curse myself, and you, and all
That let her thus be lost!
Fer. Indeed, my Lord,
The fault was not with us;—we had her sure;
When as our steeds had reach'd the rivers brink,
The Douglas by her shrill and piercing cries
Attracted—

Mon. Well! I know it all—
(A pause, during which he appears disturbed.)
In sooth
I'm little bound to thank him—that dark power,
Or be he saint or demon, or whate'er
May have presided at my natal hour,
Who thus obtrudes o'er me and my concerns
His baleful influence!—but ye 'scaped unknown!
So so, there's consolation still in that—
Hold, let me see—where said you, Wallace leads
His scanty powers?
Fer. E'en now, my Lord, across
Yon neighbouring valley tow'rds the river side.
Mon. (musing) And takes her with him! well,
it matters not;
The net I now prepare involves them both.
Ha! yes, it shall be so;—I'll hence to Edward;
While Wallace lives, he still must fear a foe,
An open, deadly and implacable foe!
Say then at once, that to the Southron's hands
I yield him up; he has his certain doom,
And I his widow'd wife, as my reward.
Hoa! Fergus!
Fer. (*Advancing*) Good, my Lord.
Mon. Away! and watch the movements of yon
troop;
Set spies at every outlet; watch them well;
Then straight despatch a messenger in haste
To tell me where they fix— [*Exit* Fergus.
yet hold awhile—
Should he retire, as I incline to think,
Tow'rds his original hold, amid the rocks,
There vainly might a host attempt to take him.
Still then to wear the mask; still seem as sworn
To share his fate—our long apparent love
Will be my pledge of faith; and what remains,
But that absolved of danger, and apart
From all observance, to the toils I lure
His credulous step? which done, the rest is easy.
[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A Mountainous View on the Banks of the Carron, bounded by thick Woods and Precipices—Wallace, *with his Troop appear descending a Pass among the Rocks—they range themselves in front*—Wallace *advancing.*

Wal. Welcome ye rude and everduring wilds!
Ye rocks and mountains!—since it must be so—
Thank Heaven your shades remain a refuge still
From fraud and tyranny—here, here at least
We may respire in freedom!—Kierly, say,
Has care been taken that the Lady Helen
Rests, as becomes her state?
Kier. It has, my Lord.

(*Enter* Ramsay, *hastily.*)

Wal. How now?
Ram. Oh, pardon, Wallace, that I come
The messenger of ill.
Wal. Say on—I hear thee.
Ram. Scotland hath sold her to eternal shame!
But now, as I have learnt, from Stirling's porch,
The recreant Comyn, Athol, and the rest
Of those cold hearted Lords, came cowering forth,
And on bent knees before the haughty Southron,
Swore fealty to Edward.
Wal. Patience! heart—
Fealty to Edward!—reptiles!—grovelling reptiles!—
Their children's shame—their country's curse pursue them!
'Tis past then—Freedom! thou hast spurned a race
Unworthy to possess thee—and on wing
Of righteous indignation borne, art fled
For ever hence! What then remains to me,

Who nine long years have laboured to preserve thee?
Must I no more attend thy sacred call;
But like a slave—oh ignominy!—learn
To lick the foot that treads me to the earth?
Curse on the thought! no, let the world beside
Bow to the tyrant's bidding—thou, my soul,
Still shalt assert thy rights—maintain thy freedom!

Enter Douglas.

Doug. Quick, bring me to your Chief—Oh! Wallace, fly—
Fly this accursed land of death and chains;
Or horrors wait thee—that my baffled tongue
Wants strength to utter.
Wal. Nay, proceed, and boldly—
Whate'er the event I have a soul to meet it!
Doug. Thus then—the ignoble council of the land
Have, with one voice, denounced thee as a traitor!
Nay further, have decreed, that not your virtues,
Your long desert, and sufferings in their cause,
Shall save you from an ignominious doom:
A guilty price is set upon your head,
And death proclaimed 'gainst all that harbour you!
Wal. Ha! Traitor!—'twas the word—Wallace and traitor!
Down climbing heart, be patient and endure!
Said he not traitor? Ha!—I did not think
To be thus infamized—but let it pass——
There's a tribunal here (*strikes his breast*) that will acquit me!—— (*with a burst of indignation.*)
Traitor!
Doug. Alas! his words are wild; his looks
Unform'd as clouds amid the shifting storm!
'Twas as I fear'd, too much for his great heart.
Wal. (*endeavouring to overcome his emotions*)
Not so—'tis past—the stroke was somewhat sudden—
But it is past—and all within is still!
The scaffold—aye, it is a meet reward
For freeing an oppressed race from bondage;

Chains too,—'tis well,—these limbs have yet of pith
Sufficient to sustain the heaviest weight
Oppression can impose! why pause ye then?
Lo! where I stand, unarm'd, approach and bind me!

(Throwing away his sword and stretching forth his arms.)

Doug. Bind thee! and could'st thou think—but I am dumb.

Wal. Tut! this forbearance lives not in your hearts.
What, tho' thro' years I've led ye on to conquest,
To hard earn'd fame—in common with the meanest,
Encounter'd want and woe, fatigue and danger;
When faint with famine, and our only food
Such casual viands as the swell of the tide
Flung on the frothy shore, I've shar'd my morsel
Unsparingly with all—and won at length,
Even as it were from her abode in Heaven,
Reluctant Liberty!—what recks it *now?*
'Tis past, 'tis nothing—wherefore should it sway ye?

Doug. Oh Wallace! this to us, thine own fast friends?
Beshrew me now, but 'tis unkindly said!
Have we preserved our faith inviolate
Thro' every ebb and flow of changeful fortune,
Thus long, and think'st thou we could e'er betray?—

Wal. *(hastily)* Ye will not then, ye will not give me up
To ignominious bonds? Yet pause awhile,—
Revolve the late decree of Scotland's Lord!
"Who harbours or abets the proscribed outlaw,
The—traitor Wallace"—think———

Doug. It weighs not with us;—
Lo! where in sight of Heaven I draw my sword,
And dedicate my faith to thee and freedom.

(Kissing the blade in token of his oath)

Ram. Thine be the voice of all.

Doug. 'Tis nobly said!
Swear then my comrades, swear, whate'er betide,
Thro' every chance and change, thro' weal or woe,
To stand or fall with liberty and Wallace!
Swear on this steel—

(Presenting his sword, they are about to take the oath required, when Wallace *hastily interposes.)*

Wal. No, no,—no oaths!
If in your hearts a voice, as one from Heaven,
Cry not "to arms, to arms against oppression,"
Away at once: oaths will not bind thee more.

Doug. Such is the force I own within this breast.

Ram. And I.

Kier. And all.

Wal. (exultingly) Then are ye conquerors!
Yes, conquerors, ev'n in death—the soul can still
Triumph o'er thraldom in its latest gasp!
Brave hearts! once more my spirit towers within me!
Thus leagued, methinks I could in safety stand
Against the war of worlds—yet is there one
Amid your ranks, mine eye in vain requires,
And fain would find: tell me,—I fear to ask—
Where is Monteith? He fell not in the conflict.

Doug. He lives, but——

Wal. Hah! I understand—a slave!
In sooth I deem'd not this: there rests but then
To add, henceforward, Cousin, we are twain!
Come, let us on—there is a secret path,
Habitual to my tread, that thro' yon glen,
In winding maze, doth lead to a retreat
Among the rocks of Clyde—a sanctuary
That tyrant force might strive in vain to pierce;
There let us fix; and watch thro' slav'ry's night
For vengeance on the oppressor! forward friends,
Wallace still lives for Scotland! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Deep Glen, surrounded on all sides by stupendous Rocks and Precipices, and interspersed with Tall Pines, Brushwood, &c.—Night—the Sky has every appearance of an approaching Storm—Wallace *is discovered reclining against a Rock.*

Wallace, *solus.*

Wal. It will not be—slumber—thou too art leagued
With an unthankful country to forsake me!
Then welcome storm and darkness. (*rising.*
Here, methinks,
In this drear desert I should dwell alone:
And with the spirit of these mountains share
His independence! Here, amid these wilds,
Whose earliest habitants, yon lofty pines,
High lift their bold heads to the liberal heavens,
And mock the tyrant blast!—tis well—the storm
Drives on apace. How lowers yon labouring sky!
The very night-bird, with instinctive dread
Scared by its ominous aspect, quits her prey;
And with shrill note, outstrips the hurrying rack
To screen her 'gainst the tumult: with like awe
The wild-wolf seeks the covert of his cave.
Above, around, below—all nature shrinks
Appall'd—save Wallace! He alone---with soul
That mingles in the tempest---woos its rage!
(*Thunder and lightning.*
Aye roll!---Ye thunders, roll!---Terrific lightnings
Flash your fork'd fires around me---here I'll sit,
(*Seating himself on a Rock.*

And deem your horrors heaven, to that worst hell
Of ease, enjoy'd but at a tyrants will!

(Thunder and Lightning.

Enter Monteith *as in pursuit.*

Mon. This way he pass'd---thanks to that friendly gleam
Of lightning which revealed him to my view!
So, having track'd the quarry to his covert,
Aid me dissimulation, while I learn,
If haply any of his followers lurk
Ambush'd amid these rocks: I should be loth
Their presence intervened to mar my projects.

Wal. Ho! there---what thing art thou, who thus beneath
This double night of darkness and of storm
Steal'st on the lions liberty?

Mon. A friend
To thee and Scotland.

Wal. Ha! Monteith! tis so. [*aside.*
(*Advancing.*) How sayest thou, friend? 'Tis a fair sounding word:
But, I will tell thee, that beneath the face
Of fairest friendship, oft'imes ambush'd lie
Dark fraud, and covert policy: away!
I know thee not.

Mon. And yet the time has been,
Thy heart had leapt to greet me!

Wal. Possibly—
I have been weak as others in my day:
But, years are monitors bring with them more
Than furrows or gray hairs—I know thee not.

Mon. I will not think it---no—'tis gross to faith,
That thou should'st look with timorous distrust
On him, thy friend, thy long loved friend, Monteith!

Wal. Monteith! why aye, I do remind me now;—
Even so, thou wert my friend!

Mon. And am so still.

Wal. Indeed! then lend an ear to a friend's counsel,
And get thee hence.

Mon. Dost mean?
Wal. As I have said.
Wouldst thou not pull destruction on thy head,
Make from my presence, fly me, for I stand;
A tottering tower upon destruction's brink,
Ready to fall, and with my crushing weight
Whelm prop and stay in one wide spreading ruin!
Hence then! I've warned thee, lose not a moment.—
Mon. Never!
No, here I'll fix, nor shalt thou throw me off!
Oh Wallace, friend, (for such I still must call thee,)
Say, whence is this, and wherefore that alone,
And all unguarded, thou dost quit the camp,
Like a pale spirit from the shrouding earth
Unloosed, to wander 'mid these desolate wilds?
Wal. It likes the habit of my temper; mark me!
Thou say'st these rocks are desolate; 'tis true;
And dost thou wonder that a kindred gloom
Has still its charm?
Mon. This is no answer.
Wal. No?
Then I will speak thee plainer—this wide circus
Where solitude hath girt her with a zone
Of rock on rock—these crags, whose mightier spires,
High tower to heaven; these rushing cataracts,
Majestic monuments of untamed nature,
Are free! all free! even as the soul of Wallace!
They hold their rights, not at a despots will,
But by primeval charter, unprofaned
Since the world was; the air that blows on them,
Has ne'er been tainted by the breath of slavery;
The earth that holds them
Has ne'er been blasted by the tyrants tread!
'Tis here alone dwells Liberty; and here
Would I, apart from man, contemplate her!
Now art thou answered?
Mon. Nobly, nobly answered!
Now do I recognize my friend again,
Such as when first he drew the conquering sword—
Wal. No more of that; trust me, I still am Wallace;
Time hath not warp'd, nor fear reversed my nature;
I still am Wallace!

Mon. These ambiguous words—
I wist not of their purport.
Wal. Say you so?
This then it is—that I am still unchanged;
Nor own like thee allegiance to a tyrant!
Mon. Now, on my soul, my knighthood, and mine honour——
Wal. Honour!
Mon. Yet hear me.
Wal. Well then, on thine honour—
One word suffices; art thou not—a slave?
Mon. No! by yon heavens that from their ebon heights
Look frowning down, as if intent to crush me,
Should I speak falsely, on my knees, I swear,
That what I ever was to thee, (and sure
Thou ne'er hadst cause to doubt me,) such I am!
Wal. Ah! couldst thou hold thee there—wert thou indeed
The man that once I knew thee——
Mon. Wherefore else
Would I have traced you to this solitude?
Would I have sought thro' toil and travail thus
Your abject fortunes? this alone methinks
Might speak my truth; you say you knew me *once*,
Oh, never, or you ne'er could doubt me *now*.
Wal. (*aside.*) I've been to blame; yes, by this heart I have;
Still is he true—still—still my friend.
Mon. Alas!
I can no more, if this avail not with thee—
Yet, by our former brotherhood of love,
By all those thousand nameless ties—in vain,
My heart, 'tis there, I have it not in words!
Wal. Monteith!
Mon. That word, I see, thou dost relent;
Thou wilt receive me to thee; press once more
This hand of friendship, which if stained with shame,
Be thou assured, I dared not proffer *thee!*
Wal. Away with hands! I want thee to my heart;
There rest for ever!

Mon. (*significantly*) Now thou art mine indeed!
Wal. Prithee forgive my doubts; I did but try thee;
Ingratitude, my friend, hath sorely wrung
This heart of late, and made me, as I fear,
Strangely mistrustful.
Mon. Think of it no more;
Hold! I have tidings shall new nerve thy spirit;
What time that ill-star'd hour o'er hapless Scotland
Proclaimed the Southron King, I and some chiefs,
Who spurned alike with thee a foreign yoke,
Fled to yon rocky fastness, thence to join
Beneath the shadowy night thy distant camp;
And chance so well hath favoured our design,
That now at Cora's foot, full many a brave
And hardy warrior waits to call thee leader.
Wal. There may be life in this—quick— bring them hither.
Mon. I haste to summon them; but tell me this—
Where hold thy followers their nightly watch?
Wal. Beneath yon southmost heights, that brow the vale;
Where from above, the frequent cataract,
Hoarse sounding down its rocky channel, spreads
Into an open lake—be but your guide
The torrents roar—you will not fail the spot.
Farewell! (*retiring to the back ground.*
Mon. (*Regarding him with an expression of triumph.*) Why, fare thee well! thou cheated fool!
The snares set—the blood hounds are abroad;
And true as ever started from the slips,
Wait but my word to cheer them on their prey.
[*Exit.*
Wal. (*advancing*). There is a stillness on me, which till now
Long time I have not felt, an intense calm,
Such as o'er stilled nature oft foretells
Dark change at hand, and dire convulsions——
(*A bugle note heard from without.*) Ha!
What sound was that? (*a pause.*)
It could not be——
(*A bugle again, and nearer.*

Betray'd!
Nay then, my faulchion! thou hast been proved 'ere now—
I have thee still!

(Drawing his Sword;—a Detachment of arm'd Soldiers appear from among the Rocks, in front of Wallace.*)*

Offi. This is the man we seek!
Wallace, thou'rt in our power!

Wal. Thy power! Fool!
Think not to take me tamely; tho' hem'd in
'Tangled with snares—unarmed—and alone,
It still is Wallace, whom ye have to cope with!
Here, firm as Ailsa rock, I make my stand!
Fall on then, ye, that with combined brands
Dare front the desperate lion in his lair:
Fall on!——

The Soldiers are appall'd—and stand irresolute —when Monteith, *wild with rage, dashes thro' the ranks—and stations himself at their head.)*

Mon. What—dastards!—hold ye back dismay'd?
Upon him! I—Monteith stand forth to lead ye!
Yes—I throw off the veil! thou dupe! behold
Thy deadliest foe! tho' hatred long hath slumbered,
Now—now it wakes to crush thee!

(Wallace *stands as stupified, his sword having dropt his from grasp.*)

Monteith *to Guards.*) Ho! there—chains;
Chains for the Wallace! it were well to bind him
While thus his frozen faculties are lost
In nerveless wilderment!

(Chains are fastened on his wrists as he stands still unconscious of what is passing around him.)

Mon. Now let me look on thee!
What, not a word? enrapt and motionless,
Spell-bound to earth? be rooted there and wither!
(a loud burst of thunder.)

Wal. (*slowly recovering, and looking around him.*)
Where am I? hush my soul! 'tis nothing real—
I dream—my senses wander—
Mon. Say you so?
Then must I fully wake thee—Wallace, hoa!
Wallace, I say! thou shackled captive, hear me!
While with a voice of thunder, thus I shout
My triumph to thy teeth! (*another clap of thunder.*)
Wal. (*with his eyes fixed on high*) Oh monster! monster!
I look tow'rds Heaven in vain! the storm rides on—
The lightnings strike him not!
Mon. And art thou fallen?
Hurl'd from that matchless and meridian height,
Where eagle like thou soaredst? yet revenge
Is but in part appeased—the greater still
Remains———
Wal. I pray thee, southron, lead me hence;
I am your prisoner; whither must I go?
Mon. Hold, I command! Nay, thou shalt hear, and more,
Shalt own that I have had good cause to hate thee!
Since from the dawn of youth, thou still hast been
My deadliest lett: in council, in the field,
Usurp'd the post due to my elder worth,
And rank superior! for till thou appear'd
I was my country's hope, her first in arms,
And honour'd as her King! 'twas thou, 'twas thou
Like a fell pest, wither'd my ripening hopes,
Obscured my fortunes, and eclipsed my fame.
Think not Monteith could idly brook such wrong;
No, tho' apparently thy firmest friend,
My hate, like lightning from a veil of clouds,
Has oft-times reach'd thee! know 'twas I, (for this
Doth memory cherish in her proudest annals)
Led on the Southrons on that glorious night,
That gave thy Castle to the enveloping flame,
Thy sire to death! I stood, and saw the steel,
All hot with gore, drawn from his reeking heart—
Saw, and approved the deed!

Wal. Oh! O, my brain!
(*Then rushing wildly forward.*)
Will not the earth gape wide, and swallow him!
And you, ye heavens! that hear, nor instant down
Hurl your avenging bolts—is it in mercy
That ye withhold them?—no, for ye have none,
No torments to requite such monstrous crimes!
Mon. Say on, thy words are music to my sense!
More, more to soothe me!
Wal. (*rushing up to him*) Execrable fiend!
What power withholds, that now, I rush not on thee,
Drag thee to earth, tear out thy treacherous heart,
Or with these chains uplifted, dash thee dead!
(*then checking himself*)—But no, I'd have thee live,
live to despair,
Live to feel all the horrors of thy guilt;
Which with a punishment, more deep and damning
Than all the torments hell can heap upon thee,
Shall goad thy soul for ever!
(*he is overcome by his emotion, and throws himself against a rock*)
Mon. Hence, away!
Hence, soldiers, with your prisoner to his fate:
Mark me, the inglorious fate, that fits a traitor!
(*retiring to the side, and surveying* Wallace *with an air of triumph*)—Expand my soul! thou art at full appeased! (*Exit*)
(*the officer waves his sword as a sign to proceed*)
Wal. Hold ye awhile! I am your prisoner;
Prepared to bow me to whatever fate
Shall seem your Monarch good; let me but look
Once more on scenes, which when mine eyes resign,
They ne'er must meet again! My much loved country!
And you, ye earliest haunts of life's career!
Take, take my latest look! heaven is my witness,
That to the last I struggled to preserve ye!
That even thus, thus captive as I am,
My sole exclusive cares are for your welfare!
Land of my Fathers, fare thee well! I go
To chains, to death! where serpent falsehood weaves

No secret snares—where all is peace, and freedom!
Yet one look more—be pardon'd these few tears—
They are my last—now lead me hence for ever!
(*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A rocky landscape.

Ramsay *and* Kierly *meeting.*

Ram. Ha! Kierly, whence this eager haste?
Kier. All's lost!
Our glorious chief by Southron troops surprised,
And carried from us!
Ram. Then all's lost indeed!
But say, by whose curst treachery—?
Kier. Hear and judge;
As on the rocks I held observant watch,
The band in triumph passed me; our bold chief
Held in vile chains! and at their head exultant,
(If that I saw him, and no demon
To mock my sight, assumed his well known form,)
The Thane Monteith!
Ram. Monteith!
Kier. Even he!
Ram. His friend!
Oh monstrous perfidy! unheard of baseness!
But whither went they? say—
Kier. Towards the heights
That wend to Cora Lyn.
Ram. No more, but fly—
Call up Lord Douglas, and alarm our troop:
Myself with yon few veterans that guard
The southern pass, will track these base invaders;
Away, and let it fire thy zeal to think,
'Tis Wallace! Wallace! whom we strive to rescue.
[*exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A romantic vale surrounded by rocks, supposed to be near the encampment of Wallace. As the scene draws, a confused noise from without.

Enter Monteith.

Mon. So! by those sounds the encampment, as I guess
Have learnt the tidings of their leaders capture.
'Tis well; amid the tumult this occasions
Will I bear off his wife!
(a whistle from without.)
And hark! my signal
Tells me, oh lucky chance, she comes this way;
Doubtless in quest of her lost lord! in sooth
'Tis even beyond my hopes.
Enter Helen.
Helen Ye trembling knees
Yet, yet a little bear me on: in vain—
This gloom forbids to thread the perplex'd maze
Of these rude rocks, and my unpractised feet
Wander unknowing wither! oh my lord,
My Wallace! where, where art thou? is there none
Will tell me if he lives, if yet he lives,
Or whence this wild disorder? *(seeing Monteith and running up to him.)*—Ha! Monteith!
Tell it me all—my Wallace—oh thou know'st
What I would ask.
Mon. *(turning away.)* Alas!
Helen. You turn away!——
Ha! then 'tis horrible! you dare not tell me,
But speak, for I have strength to hear the worst,
It will not, no, I think it will not kill me.
Mon. Then hear that worst, and oh with patience hear it;
Thy Wallace, as I gather, from his friends

Too far adventuring, was beset o'th sudden
By a stray band of Southrons, and——
Helen Was slain!
Mon. Not so, I deem that to some distant tower—
Helen Does he still live?
Mon. He does.
Helen Of that assured,
All other ills must now appear as nothing!
But whither have they led him? oh declare,
That I more swift than winds that sweep the plain,
May follow and o'ertake him, to my breast
Once, once again enfold——
Mon. What phrensy's this?
Follow, o'ertake him! heavens! and would'st thou quit
Thy country, kindred, friends?
Helen All; all for him!
To die with him, for whom alone I've lived!
Aye, Wallace, to the last thy desperate wife
Will grapple to thy ruinous fortunes; share
Thy dungeon doom, and, if it needs must be,
Cling to thy heart, in life's last agony! (*is rushing out.*)
Mon. Oh hold! e're yet you tread the paths of death,
Hold yet awhile, or stay at least to hear
Your Wallace's parting words.
Helen His parting words?
Mon. Yes, for the hour is come to make them known:
Since he must die—ha! hold! I did not mean
To wake anew your woes——
Helen Say on, say on!
Mon. Thus then, if fate, he said, if pitless fate,
E'er throw me into Edward's hands,
To thee, Monteith, as to my best-loved friend,
I do bequeath my Helen; be she thine,
Thy wife; as such thou wilt protect and love her:
Nor will she, if her Wallace e'er was dear,
Refuse him this, his last and sole request.

Helen (*after a pause*) My soul is staggered!—
surprise and doubt
My senses reel! I know not what to think;
Such were not, could not be the words of Wallace!
Thou hast belied him! ha! a light from heaven
Flares on my brain; but no, thou could'st not do it,
Thou coulds't not,—hast not—sold him to the foe?
Mon. What foul suspicion's this?
Helen Oh, no; thou hast not;
He was thy friend—he loved thee—dearly loved thee;
Honoured and trusted thee—with that firm faith
That virtuous men have in the God they worship,
Leant on thy love; ye were bred up together,
Your studies, sorrows, joys, hopes, fears the same:
Wild that I was to think it—I have wronged thee,
But thou'lt forgive me—I have foully wrong'd thee;
Ha! have I not, Monteith?
Mon. (*aside*) What folly this!
A weak girl's idle words to daunt me thus!
Helen. It staggers him! oh, all ye blessed powers!
It staggers him! what, what am I to think?
Tell me, Monteith, yet pause ere thou repliest:
Reflect the eye of heaven is now upon thee!
And sees each separate movement of thy soul!
Oh then—as if before its high tribunal—
Nay, do not turn away—but look upon me!
(*A pause.*) As I stand here—he cannot—'tis confess'd,
He cannot! see, his sunk and heavy eyes,
Will not be raised from earth! his inmost soul
Writhed in its own foul consciousness of guilt
Shrinks in abash'd—before a poor weak woman!
Oh villain! villain! (*with a shudder, and recoiling from him.*)
Monteith, (*recovering himself.*) Then thou know'st
me! hence
Each vain disguise! again I rise, and shake
Dissimulation as a cumbrous garment
From my disburthen'd soul! Thy husband, woman,
Aye, thou hast rightly said, 'twas I betrayed him:
I hated, and I sold him to the foe!
Sold him for thee; for thee the precious price
Of such a glorious deed; the sole reward
I ask'd at Edward's hands!

Helen. (*as stupified by the avowal of his guilt, then recovering herself.*) Oh horrible! horrible!
Mon. Come, come, away with these wild starts and shudderings—
'Tis useless all: be wise, be wise and hear me.
Think thou would'st tread the dark and dangerous path
That leads to shame, to misery, to ruin;
While riches, honours, pomp, power, grandeur, all
The world holds precious—woo thee to be blest!
Art thou a woman, and can'st view unmoved
What all thy sex beside would risk their lives—
Aye, and their souls too to obtain. Can'st see
Such rich and tempting fruit, (oh fairer sure
Than e'er of old the Hesperian orchards bore)
Hang in thy grasp, and yet refuse to pluck it.
Oh blind infatuation! fatal folly!
It must not be; yet, yet be wise, be mine!
Forego to tempt the desperate path of danger;
While life and safety yet are thine, enjoy them,
And shield thee from all sorrow in these arms!
Helen. This is too much, too much to bear and live!
Thy ways, oh patient Heaven, we know are just
Tho' hid from mortal sight! or might I not,
With reason might I not complain, and ask
What I had done, what unknown sin committed,
To merit such affliction? (*to* Monteith) Oh thou murderer!
Thou serpent, that hast stung the breast that warm'd thee!—
But let me not upbraid him; let me fly
Far, far from his infectious presence—
(*Is going out when* Monteith *detains her.*)
Mon. Hold!
Too long have I endured it; hold a little,
Thou goest not so.
Helen. Ah Heaven! I'm in his pow'r:
This had escaped me.
Mon. Hear and heed me well!
If I but raise my voice, or stamp my foot,
I've followers near, all sworn to do my bidding,
Will bear thee off.

Helen. Have mercy!
Mon. Nay; no struggling!
Helen. See, at your feet I fall; Oh hear me! hear me!
Mon. What would'st thou say?
Helee. As thou'rt a man, have mercy!
Do not withhold me from a dying husband.
Thou hast betray'd him to a cruel death;
Oh! will not that suffice? yet he'll forgive thee;
Indeed he will; as I, as Heaven may do;
So thou'lt but let me see him ere he dies!
Mon. Vain hope!
Helen. Ah wherefore should it be so? stay—
If 'tis my wealth thou covet'st, take it all,
I give it thee; I sign it o'er to thee,
To thee and thine for ever, and will make it
A portion of my future prayers to Heaven,
To bless thee with it! will not that suffice thee?
He hears me not! oh Heaven! he hears me not!
What shall I say to shake his horrid purpose?
Inspire, instruct me, teach me!—or are prayers
Address'd to thee in vain?
Mon. In vain! methinks
Heaven echoes back the words to thee! in vain!
Come, come away! (*taking her by the hand*)
Helen. Yet spare me!
Mon. Idle words!
Helen. Will nothing move thee! Oh, and is there none—
No hope?———
Mon. None! none!
Doug. (*rushing down the rocks, and exclaiming as he descends)* Accursed fiend! thou liest!
Down to thy native hell! there howl for ever!

(Monteith *has drawn his sword, which is struck from his grasp*; *he is stabbed, and falls dead on the earth:* Helen *sinks on her knees in speechless transport; the troops from behind crowd in on every side,)*

"*Doug.* (*exultingly*) My comrades, where, where
are ye? see, behold!
And thou, (*to Helen*) thou dear one! where the
traitor's blood
Smokes on my steel's true point! thus, thus at least
Tho' foil'd in our endeavour to redeem
Our glorious chief, we have avenged his capture!"

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Interior of a Prison.

Wallace *solus.*

Yes—thou sure end of tyranny, come on!
Thanks to the emboldening energy that nerves
A virtuous bosom, I can meet thee, Death,
With an erect front! nor shall 'scape my lips
One word of murmur!—No, if all the hopes,
The glorious hopes, with which this breast beat high,
Must, like the fleeting fictions of a dream,
Pass into nought—I bow my spirit down
In mute submission to the Eternal Will!
Yet am I man! and, oh! when I reflect—
My wife—no more of that!—a tear will fall,
A sigh will have its way, and so an end!

Enter Glo'ster.

Glos. Wallace, it pitieth me to speak thy doom;
But, lo! the Sovereign's seal and signature
Hath past—and thou must die!
Wal. I have heard no less.
Glos. Aye; but belike this hour; even now the guards
Do wait without to bear thee to thy fate;
And circling thousands, round the barrier stand,
In hope to see———

Wal. A fellow-creature die!
Is it not so?—and they shall see, my Lord,
Yea, even in death, shall see, how, undismay'd
By every chance and change, the intrepid soul
Can proudly triumph o'er oppression still!
Aye! let the death-stroke fall whene'er ye will,
I am prepared!

Glos. Farewell then, thou brave Scot!
Would that my power avail'd to change thy doom,
But Edward's edict is imperative—
Nor will admit delay—yet—yet awhile—
Farewell! (*exit.*

Helen. (*without.*) Restrain me not!

Wal. (*starting*) Whose voice was that?
Heavens! but it cannot be—

Glos. (*from without.*) Back! Soldiers—back!
I charge ye, give her way.

Wal. Mysterious powers!

Helen. (*from without.*) Wallace!

Wal. It is her voice!—it is herself!
Mine own—true Helen!

Helen (*entering.*) Ah!—He's here!—again
I have him—hold him—Oh! my life!—my lord!—
Again---again---what shall I say?—how vent
The joy— the transport—Oh!—I cannot speak—
But we will part no more!

Wal. (*clasping her.*) My heart's best bliss!
But wherefore is't, that at a time like this
We thus should meet?—thro' what unnumbered toils
Must thou have won thy difficult way---alone—
Friendless, and destitute.

Helen. Oh no---the good—
The ever faithful Donglas was my guide;
Else had I sunk, exhausted with my woes,
And died 'ere I had seen thee!

Wal. Heaven reward him!
Is he here too? and yet, my Helen, yet,
I would thou hadst not come.

Helen. Oh! say not so—
Tho' it was kindly meant; yet do not say,

On any terms thou would'st I had not come.
Oh! it makes all my happiness on earth—
Thus to enfold thee---thus by thy dear side
To share each want and woe—
Wal. Yet, yet, my love,
Wert thou but now away—
Helen. Oh! never, never;
No---never, Wallace, will I leave thee more!
Better to die ten thousand deaths together,
Than live to part again!—Yet, wherefore part?—
These sinful men—all lawless as they are,
Will not attempt thy life—
Wal. Ha! will not?
Helen. No!—
I have the Douglas' word for it—they will not—
They dare not kill thee! and for aught beside—
What recks it?—while thy Helen still be nigh
To share each woe—to soothe and comfort thee?
Then wherefore part?—or haply thou mayst deem
I'm all unfit—and of too slight a frame
To combat with the chill, and noxious airs
Of a damp dungeon—Oh! believe me—no—
If that thou see the rose upon my cheek,
Wane in its wonted bloom, or hear a sigh
O'er my sad lot escape these trembling lips,
Then send me where thou wilt---but not till then;
Beseech thee---not till then!
Wal. (*turning from her.*) Oh agony!
How shall I dare---thus soulstruck as I am,
To front her with the tidings of my doom?
And yet it must be so; all pitying heaven!
Sustain her to the trial! Helen! Helen!
Helen. My lord!
Wal. I hoped---I could have wished; (*he is unable to proceed; and turns hastily from her*);---Away---
I will not be her executioner!
I will not be the herald of a tale,
Whose slighest word will strike her dead before me!
And yet; and yet---Ah! wherefore thou unkind—
At such a moment, wherefore art thou come
To wake so fell a conflict in my breast?

Helen. (*terrified.*) At such a moment!
Wal. Oh! for mercy's sake
Let go thy withering hold upon my heart,
And leave me to my fate!
Helen. (*half shrinking from him.*) What may this mean?
You fright me; you appal me; Wallace! Wallace!
What may this mean?
Wal. Canst thou not guess?
Helen. (*frantickly*) Speak! speak!
Wal. It is---it is---Oh! turn aside that look,
Lest it unnerve me, and prepare thy heart
To hear—
Helen. Enough! I see—I see it all—
Thou art—the thirst of death is in my throat—
Thou art—I cannot speak—
Wal. Even so, condemn'd!
Nay more---perchance this very hour.
Helen. (*with a shriek of fear.*) This hour!
Wal. They'll bear me from thee; from those circling arms
That clasp me round, so close and clingingly;
They'll bear me to an ignominious death!
Helen. Death! Death! Aye, death! O God's name be it so,
If this be life—but oh! I will not think it;
Tis all an obscure dream; these grates and walls—
The cold gloom of this pestilent prison-house—
All. all a dream! a hideous, horrible dream;
Yet but a dream! and I shall wake anon,
And find it so in sooth!

(*Noise of falling bars without.*

Helen *starts.*

Hark! hark; that sound;
It has aroused me! ho! look there! they come
To tear him hence!

(*The great Gates in front are thrown open, and* Fitz Eustice, *with Soldiers, enter to bear* Wallace *to Execution.*

And I stand idly here!
Away; it must not be; it must not be:
I'll to the streets, the city, to the King!
Aye, to the King! my deep despair shall melt
His iron heart; or if it fail, my screams
Shall reach the throne of justice, and draw down
Heaven's angriest lightnings to avenge my cause!

(To soldiers who surround her)

Off, let me pass; oh! I'll do something—what
I know not—but he shall not die—Off!—off!
He shall not—

Wal. Helen!

Helen. Nay—oppose me not!
To the King! to the Kin

(She rushes wildly out — Fitz Eustace waves his sword to the Soldiers, who close around their Prisoner, and the scene shuts.

SCENE II.

Enter Douglas, *wrapt in a large dark Plaid.*

Still, still it haunts me; it pursues me still—
Yon sanded scaffold, and the fiendlike forms
Of those grim armed manslayers around it!
Ah! my poor friend! and have my heedless step
Led me again towards thy dark dungeon's cell?
But lo! the gate uncloses, and the guards
Give willing way—Almigh y Powers!—is that
Is that my friend appears?—it is—it is!
Even now they bear him to the block!
(A Bell tolls.) And hark!
That deep bell—Oh! how heavily it falls

On my crush'd heart! support me!—(*leaning against a pillar; muffled drums are heard*) Ha! it comes!
This way in dark procession wending on,
The horrid death train comes!

(*The Procession to the Place of Execution passes over the Stage, muffled drums sounding at intervals*—Fitz Eustace, *as Leader, Guards, the* Headsman, *with his Axe—preceding* Wallace, *who has reached the middle of the Stage—when* Douglas *rushes forward.*)

Doug. A moment stay—
Yet, yet, a moment—oh! my friend! my brother—
And is it thus I see thee?
Wal Thou too here?—
Kind! kind and faithful to the last!—good Southron,
Wilt thou indulge us with a moment's pause?
Fitz E. Far as my orders will allow
Wal. I thank thee.
So! to my arms thou faithfullest of friends—
Oh! thus that they might fold thee in for ever:
But fate forbids; albeit, it kindly grant
This short reprieve, yet must we part, my friend
Doug. Part, says't thou, part?
No! 'tis too much to suffer, even in thought
They shall not part us! I'll declare my rank,
My fell abhorrence of their rule, my fix'd,
My sworn attachment to the cause of freedom!
'Twill do—'twill rouse their rage; and I shall die,
As I have lived, still undivided from thee
Aye ye dire agents of a tyrant's will!
And is it blood ye thirst for? then rejoice,
Hear and rejoice! not one alone, but two—
Two victims wait to swell the copious tide,
And make the rich libation doubly dear:
For here I swear (*kneeling*)——
Wal. Hold, hold! what is't you
prithee be calm and hear me.

Doug. Well, I will,—
But oh! thou would'st not bind me to a world
So void of every bliss that gave it sweetness;
Think what a blank, a worthless blank were life,
When reft of thee; where, where then should I find
That kindred breast whereon to pour my griefs,
And lean for consolation; or that heart
To sweeten every joy by sharing it?
Oh Wallace! friend! protector! every thing!
Have we not been as brothers? have not I
Grown as it were beneath thy fostering hand?
Is there a virtue dwells within my breast
But owns thee as its author? Think of this;
I'st not a tie should bind me strongly to thee?
And shall it now be sunder'd? No, my Wallace!
Thou hast been throughout the light of all my life,
And night must hang on every road from thee.

Wal. Oh! is this well?—I was prepared for death,
Thou hast unnerved me—yet, I thank thy love,
Tho' I could fain have spared this proof of it;
But thou must live, my brother, still must live,
And to a precious end—reflect—thy country—
Thy country, Douglas, claims thee as her own—
But there's another cause——

Fitz E. The time draws on: prisoner——

Wal. I come—I come!—Think, I've a wife,
A hapless, desolate wife! who losing thee,
Were in this wide world left without a friend.

Doug. Enough! thou hast remember'd me of that
Might make me drag a lingering life of woe!
Yes Wallace, yes—thy other self, thy Helen,
Long as the breath of life inspire this frame,
I will protect her.

Wal. Wilt thou?

Doug. I have spoken.

Wal. And cheer and comfort her when I am gone?
And let her know that even in life's last stage,
My sole, sole thoughts were fix'd on her?

Doug. All! all!

Wal. Why then, my earthly cares are closed: and now,
Thou noblest, bravest, and thou best of friends,
Take this one dear embrace, and fare thee well
'Till we do meet, where nought shall part us more.
Doug. I cannot speak—but let me fold thee to me
Yet, yet a little longer; while that breast,
Which must so soon be cold, clay cold, can feel
The warm caress of friendship! Oh! farewell!
Friend of my soul, while yet I live to speak it,
Farewell for ever! [*Exit.*
Wal. So—the conflict ends!
Now to your office, to the block lead on!
(*The Procession passes on.*)

SCENE THE LAST.

A spacious Court, supposed to be near the place of execution, with Turrets and arched Gate in front, the whole presenting the appearance of an ancient Fortress of considerable extent—Wallace, &c. *discovered*—*Guards stationed on either side; as the Scene draws a loud roll of drums.*

Fitz E. Here pause awhile: this is thy latest stage!
Yon circling multitudes do mark the spot
Where thou art doom'd to die. Bethink thee then
If, ere thou reachest that tremendous bourne,
Thou hast aught to offer.
Wal. Nothing!
Fitz E. It is well.
I may proceed then, say?
Wal. Proceed!

Helen (*without*) Hold! hold!
Wal. That voice! oh! haste me to the block---or here,
Here, end me on the instant! ah! she comes!
Hide! hide! me from her view!—
Helen *rushes on followed by* Gloster, *then with a scream of joy falling on her knees*—
He lives, he lives!
Thank Heaven he lives! and I am not too late;
Still, still on earth we may be blest!
Wal. (*not having heard her*) Oh! this,
This is indeed to die! I feel it here;
It grapples at the very strings of life.
And art thou come, thou cruel! to behold
The stroke of death dealt on me?
Helen Oh! no, no—
Thou shalt not die—the King himself, my love—
The King himself has said that thou shalt live!
Oh! 'tis too much to see thee thus again;
Thus rescued from the very verge of fate—
It is too much—I must not dwell on it—
I must not—else I shall be mad—quite mad,
And lose ye spite of all.
Wal. My best, best love!
Calm thee awhile—yet much, alas! I fear
Thou hast been deceived;—my Lord of Gloster, say,
These sudden transports, what may they import?
Glos. First then, that thou art free!—this angel here,
(And sure no gentlest advocate from Heaven,
On errand of sweet mercy, e'er could plead
With more resistless energy,) even now
From the King's hand hath won thee a reprieve!
Lady, produce the pacquet that thou bearest,
And let that speak the rest.
Helen (*tearing open her vest*) 'Tis here, 'tis here!
Out on these fastenings, here.
Glos. Receive it Wallace,
And read the terms.
Wal. The terms!—there needs it not—
On to the block! (Helen *stands in despair*)

Glos. Ye powers! and wilt thou then—
Wilt thou reject?—
Helen (*rapidly*) Oh no! he will accede—
I know him well, he will accede to all—
Be satisfied—to all you may require!
Ah! me, I prate I know not what—oh Wallace!
By the blest vow that link'd our lives in one;
And by that love, which, if 't indeed be true,
What thine empassioned lips so oft have sworn,
Thou hast ever borne me, do not banish quite
The sole, sole hope of my most wretched state;
But oh! in mercy to a soul, bow'd down
And sunk in extreme agony, oh! say
But those, those onlywords, that thou wilt live—
And I am blest!
Wal. My love!—thou dost forget—
The terms—
Hel. Oh, no!—thou wilt accept
them—aye—
There is a softening spirit in thine eye—
Thou wilt accept them?
Wal. Oh! my torn—torn heart!
Knowst thou their import?
Hel. No! thy life was saved—
Thy life!—'twas all I knew— 'twas all I asked—
'Twas all I reck'd of—
Wal. Then there rests but this—
Helen! I yield my fate into thine hands!—
(*giving her the pacquet*)
Read o'er the terms—and if thou deem them such
As honor might accept—I will abide—
So hear and help me, Heaven—by thy decree!
Hel. (*after a pause, during which she has endeavoured to read*)
There is a thickening mist about mine eyes—
I cannot see—(*to* Gloster, *giving the pacquet*)
Read—read—I prithee read—
Glos. Thus then saith Edward— "Let the prisoner
swear
Henceforward to renounce his country's cause;
With all submission, paying homage due
To England's mightier throne—and he is free!"

Wal. Now—Helen—fix my doom!—
Helen. (*taking the pacquet*) Are such—are such
The imposed conditions, in regard of which
He can alone be saved?—and must he—ha!—
Must he? I will not dare to dwell on it!—
Oh no!—'twere rank—'twere odious in the sight
Of earth and heaven—of men and angels—odious.
And yet---the horrible alternative!
How shall I ee'r—oh, heaven! and all ye powers!
Is it in human nature for a wife
To doom a husband's death?—to sign him o'er
To the fell headsman's axe—and see that neck,
Round which her passionate arms so oft' have clung
In thrilling speechless extasy—I cannot—
(*with a convulsive shudder*)
No!—'tis too horrible!—I cannot do it!
Wal. Yet recollect thee—love—
I have confided in thine honour!
Hel. Ha!—
And must I then?—
Wal. No more—I wait my doom!
Glos. Yet pause awhile—reflect he is thine own—
Flesh of thy flesh—thine own true bosom's lord!—
And heaven and nature join to bid thee save him!
Speak but the word then—
Wal. Helen!
Glos. From the axe
O' the headsman snatch him!
Hel. (*in a state of desperation, and summoning all her fortitude*) No! if such the terms,
Barbarians! we disclaim—we tread upon them!
(*tearing the paper*)
And thus—encircled in each other's arms,
thus, we'll die together!
(*throwing herself into his arms, he strains her to his heart.*)
Enter Cliff rd.
Clif. Good, my lords,
The king but now has sent me to revoke
His late so hasty act of grace and see

Swift execution done upon the Scot—
Justly incensed, for that the traitor, Bruce,
Even now, as we have heard, hath fled to Scotland;
And at the head of that revolted realm,
'Mid thousands, who acclaimed him king, again
Hath bid defiance to our Southron powers!

Wal. (*who had listened to this intelligence with encreasing rapture, now rushes forward, and with a burst of exultation*)
Ha! free again! once more my country free!
Catch the blest sound ye choiring angels—ye
That circle heavens high throne exultingly—
Ye thunders, join your notes, and loud proclaim
To all the astonished world the tidings round,
Scotland again is free! the star hath risen,
That presages a day of peace!
The Bruce! the Bruce! he comes—he rushes on,
Resistless in his might!—a nation starts
From bondage at his call, and tramples on
Her chains!—my native land is free!
Scotland again is free!

Clif. But for thee
This instant——

Wal. Aye—this instant to the block!
Scotland is free—and Wallace falls contented!

Clif. Now lead him on!—
The King hath sworn he will not quit yon tower,
'Till the commingling swell of trump and drum
Shall to the city's utmost bounds proclaim
The arch-rebel is no more!
Come!— (*Helen falls senseless into the arms of Gloster.*)

Wal. Hold yet awhile—
Helen!—my latest moment is arrived—
Nay; rouse thee—and collect thy nobler self
To bid me one farewell—one dear farewell—
'Till we do part——

Clif. Now—Prisoner—it were best—
Guards! bear him to the block!

(*Soldiers approach.*

Wal. (with extreme indignation.)
Back ! back ! ye slaves!
Nor dare pollute me with those ruffian hands !
Shall it not be permitted me to pour
A few warm tears, o'er an expiring wife?
Look there ! there! there! (*throwing himself on his knees beside her*) Thou loveliest and thou best!
Is there a power on earth to tear me hence,
Ere I have ta'en of thee one last embrace?
Ah me! my wife! my poor, dear, desolate wife!
And art thou stricken thus for me?—for me
Falls this stroke on thee? Ah! when I'm gone
Thou shalt revive! for I have been to thee
As the fell poison tree, beneath whose shade,
Thou, sweetest flower, hast sick'ning died away!
Farewell! farewell! farewell! (*retiring slowly*)
Yet one kiss more!
One other! oh, eternally farewell!

(*Tearing himself away, yet still gazing on her till he is out of sight—a pause, during which she exhibits signs of returning animation.*)

Glos. Thou Lily! borne by the rude sway o'th' storm,
Thus low to earth, dost thou again look up?
Helen. Where am I? Still, still in this world of woe!
All horrible things are round me and about me!
What is it ye would have? Who are ye? Hence
Officious, and not merciful! avaunt!
Ye cannot make me live! ha! look!---look there!
The very vision of my brain! (*gazing wildly upon the Scaffold situate at a small distance.*)
Glos. (*Aside*) Oh, turn aside thine eyes, and see it not; come thou with me. (*attempting to lead her away—she resists.*)
Helen. No, never! never! never
Dost thou not see? Tis there, I tell thee---there!
Hence! I'll abide the sight on't, with a strength
Of soul — it shall amaze ye! — still he lives!

Still !---still !---and now the parting prayer is o'er,
And no hope—none ! Wallace ! but one, one look !
(*Then with a scream of horror*)
Ah, Heaven ! he bows his head upon the block !
Save—save him ! save him——

(*She breaks precipitately from the arms of* Gloster, *and rushes forward with frantic eagerness*—Douglas, *at the same instant, has burst thro' the surrounding Guards, exclaiming* "Helen ! Helen !"—*when a loud roll of the drums is heard from without—she stops as if paralized, then, with a wild shriek, falling back, expires in the arms of* Douglas.)

THE END.

Printed by W. SMITH, King Street, Long Acre.

NEW PLAYS

Published by JOHN MILLER,

69, FLEET-STREET.

A WILD GOOSE CHACE, a Farce, 2*s*.
THE PROMISSORY NOTE, an Operetta, 2*s*
THE GNOME KING, a Melo-drama, 2*s*
THE MARRIAGE, OF FIGARO, an Opera, 2s. 6d.
THE LIBERTINE, an Opera, 2s.
MAGPIE, OR MAID, a Melo-drama, 2s.
ROBINSON CRUSOE, a Melo-drama, 2s.
PERCY'S MASQUE, a Dramatic Poem, 4s. 6d.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2009

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

0 014 549 982 3